

WHAT IS CLAIMED:

1. Apparatus for allowing a consumer to digitally mark media content and later retrieve portions of the marked media content keyed to that consumer, comprising:
 - a. means for storing media content;
 - b. means for sampling portions of the stored media content from the means for storing media content;
 - c. identification means, having identifying indicia; and
 - d. means for marking selected instances of the sampled portions of the stored media content for future retrieval by the consumer using the identification means.
2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the means for storing media content comprises a server computer.
3. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the means for sampling portions of the stored media content comprises a workstation connected to the server computer.
4. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the identification means comprises a numbered certificate.
5. The apparatus of claim 4, wherein the consumer remains anonymous.
6. The apparatus of claim 4, wherein the consumer's identity is keyed to the numbered certificate.
7. The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the identifying indicia further comprises a bar code.

9. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the means for marking further comprises an array referencing the identifying indicia and indicia keyed to the selected instances of the sampled portions of the stored media content.

10. Apparatus for allowing a consumer to digitally mark portions of media content and later retrieve the marked portions uniquely keyed to that consumer, comprising:

- a. storage for storing the media content;
- b. a server computer accessing the media content storage;
- c. a workstation interacting with the server computer to allow the consumer to sample portions of the stored media content;
- d. a plurality of portable identification means, separate from the server and the workstation, and including identifying indicia unique to each instance of the portable identification means; and
- e. an array containing references to the identifying indicia and indicia keyed to selected instances of the sampled portions of the stored media content.

11. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the server computer and the workstation are co-located.

12. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the server computer is remote from the workstation.

13. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the workstation and the server computer are the same machine.

14. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the server computer and the workstation are connected by a local area network.

15. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the server computer and the workstation are connected by a hard-wired connection not involving a local area network.

17. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the identifying means is a numbered certificate.

19. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the array further comprises indicia of the consumer's identity.

20. Apparatus for allowing a consumer to digitally mark portions of media content and later retrieve the marked portions uniquely keyed to that consumer, comprising:

- a. storage for storing the media content;
- b. a server computer accessing the media content storage;
- c. a workstation interacting with and connected to the server computer to allow the consumer to sample portions of the stored media content;
- d. a plurality of portable digital markers, separate from the server and the workstation, and including a bar code unique to each instance of the portable digital marker; and
- e. a shopper's reference database containing references to the unique bar codes and references to the sampled portions of the stored media content.

21. The apparatus of claim 20, wherein the shopper's reference database further comprises indicia of the consumer's identity.

22. A method of allowing a consumer to digitally mark portions of media content and later retrieve the marked portions uniquely keyed to that consumer, comprising the steps of:

- a. retrieving a sample of the media content;
- b. entering a unique identifier;
- c. keying the retrieved sample to the unique identifier; and
- d. at a later time, retrieving the sample by entering the unique identifier.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein the step of entering a unique identifier further comprises scanning a unique barcode from a numbered certificate.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein the step of entering a unique identifier further comprises entering consumer information associated with the unique barcode.

25. The method of claim 23, wherein the step of retrieving the sample further comprises scanning the unique barcode from the numbered certificate.

26. The method of claim 22, further comprising the step of distributing a database containing the unique identifier and samples keyed to the unique identifier from a central location to at least one non-central location.

27. The method of claim 26, wherein the database is distributed on a scheduled basis.

28. The method of claim 26, wherein the database is distributed upon request from the non-central location.

29. The method of claim 22, further comprising the step of entering consumer information and associating the consumer information with the unique identifier.